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Holiday Gift Guide 2009

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Holiday Gift Guide 2009

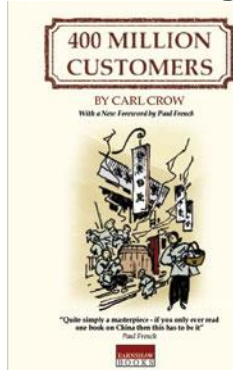
December 7, 2009 in [Holiday gifts](#) by [The China Beat](#) | [Permalink](#)

If shopping for holiday gifts has you stymied, *China Beat* is here to help. We've put together a list of China-related books that will make great gifts — and all of them are appropriate for the general-interest reader.

For: The Nostalgic Reader

[Earnshaw Books](#) has been reprinting a number of older books, including many expat memoirs from early 20th century China. We've [previously reviewed](#) *Shanghai: High Lights, Low Lights, Tael Lights*, an entertaining glimpse into 1930s Shanghai penned by Maurine Karns and Pat Patterson. The press is also releasing [a three-volume set of drawings](#) by White Russian cartoon artist Sapajou, which Paul French writes about [here](#).

For: The Budding Entrepreneur



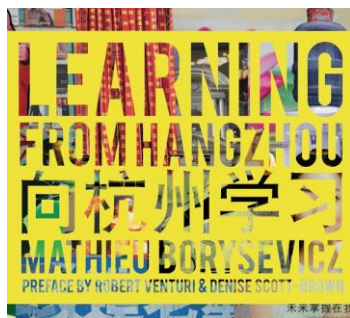
Another old title now available again is Carl Crow's *400 Million Customers*, which is a sharp-tongued set of observant essays about the ins and outs of doing business in China. Much of what Crow has to say about China in the 1930s is still true today, and his book serves as both a how-to guide and a cautionary tale for those who dream of cracking the China market.

For a more current look at Chinese business culture, check out the documentary [Win in China](#) (see [here](#) for a *China Beat* interview with director Ole Schell).

For: The Visual Learner

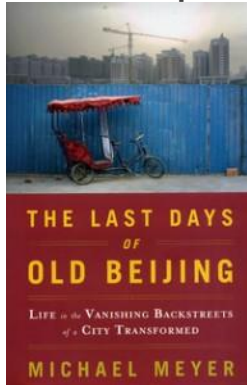
The Inmost Shrine: A Photographic Odyssey of China assembles the late-19th century photographs of Scottish explorer John Thomson. An excerpt from Michael Meyer's introduction to the book can be read at [Danwei](#).

If there are fans of propaganda art on your shopping list, they might be interested in [Postcards from Utopia](#), a collection of Socialist Realist and Fascist artwork from a variety of countries.



Mathieu Borysevicz has put together an impressive photographic collection in *Learning from Hangzhou* (which has previously been featured on the *Wall Street Journal's* [China blog](#)).

For: The Frequent Flyer



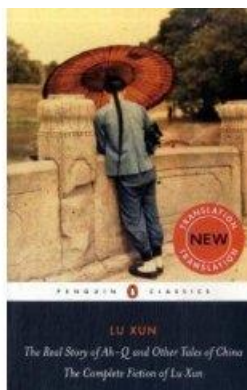
Looking for a paperback that will fit nicely into a carry-on bag? Consider [China Underground](#), Zachary Mexico's volume of tales about the lives of Chinese artists, rock musicians, and writers. [Postcards from Tomorrow Square](#) brings together James Fallows's China columns from *The Atlantic*; read [a review by Jonathan Spence](#) at the *New York Times* website. Several of the general-interest China books that we recommended in [last year's gift guide](#) are now available in paperback, such as Lijia Zhang's "[Socialism is Great!](#)", Michael Meyer's [The Last Days of Old Beijing](#), and Leslie T. Chang's [Factory Girls](#).

For: The History Buff

Readers who enjoy sinking their teeth into a good history book might like to receive William Rowe's [China's Last Empire](#), which looks to be a very accessible overview of the Qing Dynasty by a highly regarded historian. There's also a new biography of Hergé, creator of the Tintin comics, who set some of his adventures in China and had a decades-long interest in the country. Pierre Assouline's [Hergé: The Man Who Created Tintin](#) tells this story, and you could gift that together with the Tintin-in-Shanghai comic [The Blue Lotus](#) or [Tintin in Tibet](#).

For: The Less-than-Organized Shopper

If you don't expect to finish your 2009 shopping until well into 2010, we have good news — several highly anticipated China books are coming out in the coming months, so slip an IOU into an envelope and don't forget to pick up these titles when they're released.



The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China, a new translation of Lu Xun's fiction writings by Julia Lovell, has been published in [the U.K.](#), and [the American edition](#) will be out on January 26. Peter Hessler's [Country Driving](#) is already available to German readers (it's titled [Über-land](#) in Deutschland), and is scheduled for its English-language release on February 9, 2010. *China Beat* readers in Southern California can come to UC Irvine on February 16 to hear Hessler speak in a conversation with UCI History professor Ken Pomeranz. Finally, Jeff Wasserstrom's [China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know](#) will be available in April, and would make a great gift for travelers embarking on their first trip to China.